

Lake County Updates

- As of yesterday afternoon, 1,044 Lake County residents have tested positive for COVID-19, and we have had 23 deaths.
- The State has reported 15,078 cases and 462 deaths in Illinois due to COVID-19, and over 75,000 people have been tested.
- We know the number of cases is not representative of all who are infected, as testing availability continues to be extremely limited.
- The Health Department is also investigating 20 long-term care facilities in our county that have at least 2 cases. These facilities have a combined total of 150 cases.
- Lake County released a **Coronavirus Data Hub** this week to centralize data related to COVID-19 in Lake County, available at lakecountyil.gov/COVID19data.
 - The hub includes the number of cases and deaths in Lake County and in the State of Illinois, an interactive map of COVID-19 cases by municipality, demographic breakdowns of cases, and charts showing trends in cases and deaths over time. An additional dashboard includes Lake County census data.
- We have not seen the peak of this outbreak, and over the next few weeks, we are expecting to see a significant increase in the number of COVID-19 cases in Lake County.
- We want to keep you updated on how Lake County is working with the community
 - We are working with community partners and businesses to secure and distribute **personal protective equipment** to long-term care facilities and first responders.
 - We are **working closely with homeless services providers** to ensure that people experience homelessness have access to telemedicine and behavioral health services. Individuals experiencing homelessness have been moved to motels.
 - The Health Department is **coordinating with our regional hospital systems to explore the possibility of opening an alternative care sites** should our hospitals request this type of assistance. They have not requested this assistance at this time.
 - We are working with the Illinois Emergency Management Association and hotels to secure rooms for people who may not be able to return home due to COVID-19 illness
 - We are working with **emergency food services and pantries** including Catholic Charities and the Northern Illinois Food Bank to ensure that significantly increased demand for food can be accommodated within the county.
 - We are working closely with United Way in identifying **volunteer opportunities** and coordinate volunteers to assist with the COVID-19 response.
- **These next few weeks are critical** in preventing the spread of COVID-19 through social distancing and following the governor's stay-at-home order.

- Stay home unless it is necessary to leave.
- If you do need to go out, follow the social distancing guidelines – that is 6 feet between yourself and others, and wear a face covering.
- Frequently wash your hands
- Cover your coughs and sneezes
- And the most obvious, stay home and isolate yourself from others in your household if you are sick.
- Recent studies show that a significant portion of people who are infected with the novel coronavirus do not have symptoms (“asymptomatic”). Some people who are infected will develop symptoms later (“pre-symptomatic”). Both asymptomatic and pre-symptomatic people can transmit the virus to others in close proximity when they talk, sneeze, or cough.
 - **Because of this, the CDC recommends that people wear a cloth face covering to cover their nose and mouth when visiting public places such as grocery stores and pharmacies, where proper social distancing is difficult to maintain.**
 - Information on how to wear and care for cloth face coverings, including DIY instructions for creating them from common household items are available on the CDC website: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/diy-cloth-face-coverings.html>.
 - The purpose of cloth face coverings is to protect people around you if *you* are infected but do not have symptoms. If you wear one, please continue following social distancing guidelines, frequently wash your hands, and avoid touching your face.
 - Cloth face coverings are not surgical masks or N-95 respirators, which are currently in short supply. Please save those critical supplies for healthcare workers and first responders.
- The **Public Health Emergency Operations Center has received reports of food insecurity** in some areas of the county due to food bank/pantry volunteer shortages and increased community need.
 - Anyone needing assistance finding food, shelter, rent or utility assistance, or other essential services can call 211 or TEXT their zip code to 898211 to speak with someone who can help 24/7. United Way of Lake County is also coordinating volunteers via its website, www.211lakecounty.org.
- **United Way is coordinating volunteers** to serve meals to people who are homeless, deliver meals to seniors, provide general office support, and much more. Both telework and in person volunteer opportunities exist.
 - Additionally, the Lake County Health Department is looking for medical volunteers to help staff alternative care sites.

- Register to volunteer on the United Way Lake County website.
<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSeHlujrAxtmB21jNJy1cZ3jbr31k-LFbkjguB7fKncQpAymA/viewform>
- Many people are facing layoffs and financial challenges during this time. We wanted to highlight a few options for assistance.
 - **SNAP (formerly known as food stamps) has been expanded.** Those currently receiving this benefit should see the maximum benefit amount which will be automatically deposited onto their Link card this week. We strongly encourage you to share information about SNAP with your constituency. Since food pantries in the county are seeing higher demand for services, it is important that we are letting people know about the benefits they may be eligible for.
 - Additionally, if someone is low income, they may be eligible for **Medicaid**. People who are eligible can enroll in Medicaid at any time.
 - You can enroll in SNAP and Medicaid at ABE.Illinois.gov. Even if someone is unsure if they would be eligible, there is a tool on the website called “Check if I should apply.”
 - Also, if someone loses their insurance because they lost their job, they are eligible for a special enrollment period for health insurance. They can explore their options at healthcare.gov.
- **These conference calls are now moving to a once-weekly call on Thursdays only.**
 - A new form has been created for you to submit your questions and suggestions for information to be shared.
 - Submissions need to be received by Tuesday at noon to be considered for the call. We will try to address as many questions as possible but will prioritize the top questions and those that pertain to the Lake County Health Department’s response to the pandemic.
 - Form to submit questions: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/6XYKQHJ>

Policy

- The 2020 Census is happening now. You can respond online, by phone, or by mail. Citizenship information is not collected. <https://2020census.gov/en/ways-to-respond.html>
- The State of Illinois has extended the Stay at Home Order and disaster declaration, and schools and non-essential businesses will remain closed through April 30.
- The \$2.2 trillion coronavirus stimulus package, called the CARES Act, was passed into law. Among its many provisions, it will provide direct stimulus payments to individuals and families. Information will be available from the IRS. <https://www.irs.gov/coronavirus>

Businesses

- The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention on Wednesday issued **new guidelines aimed at getting workers who have been exposed to the coronavirus** in critical fields back to work faster.
 - Under the old guidance, workers were told to stay at home for 14 days if they were exposed to someone who had tested positive for coronavirus.
 - The new guidelines will allow critical workers who have been exposed go back to work as long as they are asymptomatic and follow conditions like taking their temperature before going to work, wearing a face mask at all times and practicing social distancing at work as much as possible.
 - <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/downloads/critical-workers-implementing-safety-practices.pdf>
- **The Health Department has updated its guidance** for businesses to include guidance for use of masks and face coverings, these are available in both English and Spanish on our website. <https://www.lakecountyl.gov/4412/Information-for-Specific-Groups>
 - Our recommendation is that all workers should wear a mask at all times when in congregate settings, when working with clients, or when following standard social distancing protocols is not feasible.
 - If traditional disposable masks are unavailable, homemade cloth masks face coverings may be used.
- Lenders can begin processing applications for the Paycheck Protection Program on Friday, April 4. The Paycheck Protection Program is a forgivable loan program that helps businesses keep people on the payroll <https://www.sba.gov/funding-programs/loans/paycheck-protection-program-ppp> (This was part of the CARES Act)
- The US Department of Labor issued guidance explaining paid sick leave and expanded family medical leave. Posters are available to be posted at workplaces to explain new employee rights. <https://www.dol.gov/newsroom/releases/whd/whd20200326>
- One-time grants for artists and art organizations are available through the Arts for Illinois Relief Fund at [ArtsforIllinois.org](https://www.ArtsforIllinois.org)
- The \$2.2 trillion coronavirus stimulus package, called the CARES Act, was passed into law. It includes several types of loans and programs to help businesses. The U.S. Senate Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship put together a Guide to the CARES Act to assist businesses in understanding the new law and how it can help. <https://www.sbc.senate.gov/public/index.cfm/guide-to-the-cares-act>
- As of March 27th, loan applications for the Illinois Small Business Emergency Loan Fund are available on the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity website <https://www2.illinois.gov/dceo/SmallBizAssistance/Pages/EmergencySBAInitiatives.aspx>

- The state launched *Illinois Helps*, an emergency response system to manage volunteer healthcare providers. Governor Pritzker has urged anyone in the medical field to register. <https://illinoishelps.net/>

Municipalities

- To find out more about health insurance options, visit [GetCoveredIllinois.Gov](https://www.getcoveredillinois.gov).
- Residents can apply for public benefit programs including healthcare (Medicaid), food (SNAP), and cash assistance at ABE, the state's Application for Benefits Eligibility. Paper applications are still accepted and can be mailed or faxed to DHS Family and Community Resource Centers. The state also launched the IDHS *Help is Here* toll-free line at 1-833-2-FIND-HELP to assist with public benefit applications. <https://abe.illinois.gov/abe/access/>
- The state launched *Illinois Helps*, an emergency response system to manage volunteer healthcare providers. Governor Pritzker has urged anyone in the medical field to register. <https://illinoishelps.net/>
- The state has extended the income tax filing and payment deadline by three months, from April 15 to July 15. <https://www2.illinois.gov/sites/coronavirus/Resources/Pages/EconomicAssistance.aspx>
- Driver's license expirations, id cards, vehicle registrations, and other document filings have been given a 30-day extension <https://www.cyberdriveillinois.com/home.html>.
- The Real ID enforcement deadline has been pushed back to October 1, 2021. Residents can delay getting this new form of identification. <https://www.dhs.gov/news/2020/03/26/acting-secretary-chad-wolf-statement-real-id-enforcement-deadline>

Faith

- United Way is coordinating volunteer opportunities during COVID-19. Help is requested to assist with grocery shopping and delivery, preparation of meals and food boxes, and there is a shortage of blood donations. The Lake County Health Department is also looking for medical volunteers to help staff alternative care sites. <https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSeHlujrAxtmB21jNJy1cZ3jbr31k-LFbkbjguB7fKNcQpAymA/viewform>

Supplemental Community Resources Information

- 211: If anyone in your community needs assistance finding food, shelter, rent or utility assistance, or other essential services, CALL 211 or TEXT your zip code to 898211 to speak with someone who can help. 211 is available 24/7. <https://211lakecounty.org/>
- To get general information about coronavirus via text message, text "COVID19" to 211211.
- In Lake County, philanthropic opportunities also exist to help people during this challenging time.
 - Mano a Mano has launched a **COVID-19 Tanda Emergency Fund** which will help immigrant families directly, who are often excluded from government benefits. Learn more or donate at their website: <https://mamfrc.org/page-18194>
 - United Way of Lake County, Lake County Government, Lake County Community Foundation, and the Lake County Municipal League have joined together to create the **Lake County COVID-19 Community Response Fund**. <https://www.liveunitedlakecounty.org/covid19/>
- Rental evictions have been suspended nationwide.
- There is a 60-day moratorium for all evictions and foreclosures on FHA, Fannie Mae, and Freddie Mac-insured properties
- The Illinois Commerce Commission suspended disconnections for all electric, natural gas, water and wastewater services. Late fees will be waived until May 1 or when the crisis is deemed to have passed.
- State-level unemployment benefits have been expanded.
- Individuals co-quarantined or isolated with an abuser can contact the National Domestic Violence Hotline 1800-799-7233, or the Illinois Domestic Violence Hotline at: 1-877-TO END DV or 877-863-6338 (Voice), 1-877-863-6339 (TTY), Chat at thehotline.org.
- Many providers and programs are offering free or low cost internet <https://www.digitalinclusion.org/free-low-cost-internet-plans/>.